

# INTERNATIONAL

# REVIEW

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*The World's Most Significant Thought and Action*



# The World As It Is

## ROMANCE IN THIRD REICH

THE VOELKISCHE BEOBACHTER greeted jubilantly the first report of the Moscow trial. Its writers called it an "anti-semitic cleansing" (sic). But by the time the Nuernberg Party Day had arrived, the Nazi theorists issued an explanation that was more in line with the "International Jew Banker-Bolshevist" boggy by which the German Michel's nose is kept close to the grindstone:

"The Moscow sentences rather go to prove the victory of one Jew clique over another. The unlimited domination of the Soviet Union has now been acquired by the Stalin-led triumvirate, chosen by Israel from the lowest scum of Eastern Europe. This triumvirate consists of: Stalin's father-in-law and his proxy, Kaganovich-Kohn, called the 'Father of the Jews'; the Commissar of Foreign Affairs and the present chairman of the council at Geneva, Litvinov-Finkelstein alias Wallach alias Nitz alias Graff alias Poliansky, nicknamed Papasha, who is well known for his crimes and prison terms both in and out of his country; and finally the Commissar of Internal Affairs and the Leader of the G.P.U., Hershel Yagoda, whose real name, Judah, suggests immediately that of Jehu, the horrifying Old Testament slaughterer in Israel." (*Voelkische Beobachter*, August 29, 1936). As usual, the Nazi stylist spares Stalin, whose personality continues to excite the admiration of the Nazi party stalwarts. If he only cut away for good from his Jewish associates!

## HITLER THE TROTSKYITE

(Henri de Kerillis patriotic French reactionary in *Echo de Paris*): "Just as Kaiser Wilhelm sent Lenin into Russia in a sealed train, so Hitler the supposed champion of a new moral order, sends into France the most dangerous anarchistic agitators with the mission of preparing here the Revolution. This general revolution, which he pretends to oppose, will be his best means of destroying France and establishing German domination over Europe."

## WALTER DURANTY MARX

Walter Duranty, who always writes as he pleases and in the bewhiskered heroic period of Bolshevism was wont to cable from Riga quaint tales about the nationalization of women in Red Russia, and who after entering the land of the Soviets then became the non-official mouthpiece of the Kremlin to the Western Continent, is now vacationing in the effete old world. In his capacity as a respected exponent of the Stalinist-Leninist-Bolshevist school of Marxism, he fascinates his American readers in the New York Times Magazine with detailed description of how revolutions are made, according to the best and latest theory of the gentlemen's lounge and smoking room of Hotel Metropol in Moscow on the subway. His is a sort of recipe for revolution, interlarded with telling anecdotes about the great and greater Lenin, who little by little is displacing Barnum, Lincoln and Nasr-ed-dinn as the putative author of all wise sayings. The cutest story (the gnarled Marxist Duranty uses the conveniently indefinite "I have been told" most effectively) is one that ends like this.

"'All right', said Lenin, 'the revolution begins now.' And it did."

## ANDRE GIDE TELEGRAPHS TO STALIN

From his "Retour de l'U.R.S.S."

On the route from Tiflis to Batum, we passed Gori, the small town where Stalin was born. I thought that it would without doubt be courteous to send him a message in reply to our reception in the U.S.S.R., where we were everywhere acclaimed, feted, and made much ado about. I thought I would never find a better occasion. I asked to have the auto stop near a post office and held out the text of my telegram. It contained the following: "Passing Gori in the course of our marvelous trip, I feel the cordial need of addressing you . . ."

But here the translator stopped: I could not talk that way. The 'you' was not at all sufficient when the 'you' referred to Stalin. It was not at all proper. Something had to be added.

As I manifested some lack of understanding, there was a general consultation. The following was then proposed to me: "You, leader of the workers." or "master of peoples" or . . . something else like that. I found it absurd. I protested that Stalin was above such nonsense. But I argued in vain. Nothing could be done about it. My telegram would not be sent unless I consented to the addition . . .

## IF JOSHUA WHY NOT HITLER?

*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*:

"It would have been the first time that the opening of a Party Day had been spoiled by rain. Rain, storm-driven, beat against the window-panes at 9:30 a.m.—just before the Hitler Youth were about to march by the Fuehrer. But as the Hitler Youth swung into the street, the rain ceased—as if at an order. The parade began. The Fuehrer stood on the balcony of the Deutsche Hof. At 10 a.m. all was over. And then, on the dot, it began to rain again."

## WHAT IS IT?

What is a capitalist? The *Voelkische Beobachter*.

"To a reasoning man a capitalist is not an owner of capital or property. A capitalist is a man who believes that capital is all powerful. All Marxists are therefore capitalists, for they believe that the dependence of the worker on capital is an unquestionable law of nature."

## WHAT IS IT?

And what is democracy? Nazi "Leiter" Dr. Dietrich at Nuernberg Party Day:

"Democracy signifies the rule of the nation and not the rule of the majority of the nation, that is, not the rule of numbers."

## THE LEGAL MIND

Dr. N. Pritt, a "liberal" British lawyer who was among the outstanding observers invited by the Soviet government some time before the Moscow Trotskyist-Fascist trial to sit in at the sudden Moscow Trotskyist-Fascist trial:

"This trial has certainly contributed to free the U.S.S.R. from counter-revolution. And it is no less clear that the *Soviet juridical system has revealed itself as one of the most modern in the world.*" (He must have borrowed that, all but the smoked eye-glasses, from our own Jonathan Ayres.)

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# BEHIND APPEARANCES IN SPAIN

• Roberto

**T**HIS ARTICLE is composed of answers to questions sent to Roberto by readers of *International Review*. Because of our limited space we do not reproduce the questions, hoping that their content appears fully in Roberto's comments.

## Questions on neutrality:

1. It is true that the world press (outside of the Soviet Union) has assumed that the new supply of arms now being used by the anti-rebel forces in Spain have been supplied by the Soviet State. There is some factual basis to such an assumption. As I pointed out before, gold pesetas will buy freely tools of war and military services whenever they are permitted to do so. It is unwise to indicate the several sources of these arms, but the knowledge of the identity of such sources should make many people smile. The Soviet State is really living up to its promise. That does not mean to say that certain primary material does not reach republican Spain from Russia, but the latter also sends the same commodities to Italy, which supplies these essential goods (as oil, coal, wheat) to Franco's army. As our Jonathan Ayres would say, there is something like world economic inter-dependence.

2. Thorez, Duclos, Peri, (Cachin must stay on the sidelines because of his fine war record) are taking advantage of Blum's inability to talk openly. Blum cannot talk openly because he feels that frank talking would endanger the Franco-Soviet pact, on which, he thinks, the peace of Europe depends. The *Berner Tagwacht* published the report of the address that Blum made recently before a private meeting of the F. I. S. O. (Socialist Party of France) National Committee in order to explain the "neutrality" muddle, after Thorez' first attack. Blum is said to have stated that, before embarking on neutrality, he approached both the British and Soviet government, asking them whether they would stick by their French ally in the event of a break with Italy and Germany as a result of his policy of aid to republican Spain. Eden said: "Never!" The Soviet government declared that the Franco-Soviet pact could not be interpreted as applying to such cases. Eden has, of course, denied the allegation. The Soviet diplomats did not bother to make denials but quite shrewdly told the world that they were obliged to remain neutral because they did not want to lose the friendship of obstinately neutral France. The argument is clever. The famous writer of Florence taught the princes of his day a technique of deviousness that belonged specifically to his time. Soviet diplomacy is up-to-date Machiavellianism; it is on the par with Soviet juridical system. Only Hitler can rival the Soviet statesmen and jurists. The fact is that the U.S.S.R. insisted on neutrality for itself, and therefore for France, because it wanted the approval of Great Britain, without which France cannot help in the possibly near war with Nazi Germany. The Communist Party of France waxes in its hypocritical farce of opposition to Blum on the Spanish neutrality question, though Blum is obliged to stick to uncomfortable neutrality by the stand of the U.S.S.R., which is angling for Great Britain's good will. Poor Blum! An earnest and rather courageous Social Democrat who, like other Social Democrats now and before, is trying to make capitalism be good. The cards are stacked against him. They favor the C.P. politicians. The movement of capitalism will make fools of them all. One way or another, the working

cattle will be marched off to the slaughter. But it can't always be so. Human beings do learn.

The French Communist Party wants the French government to take a more belligerent stand toward Hitler, that is, concretize the Franco-Soviet Pact. Blum's arm is being twisted to make him be good.

3. Let me repeat. The British government (Foreign Office, War Office, etc.) serves the interests of the British dominant class (the propertied, the investors, the intreprenuers, at home and abroad). But these interests are often sectionally antagonistic. British capitalism also has general national interests, equalling the sum and cancellation of the various antagonistic sectional interests. The Foreign Office may for some time favor and even aid the Spanish militarist rebels. It may strive, for some time, to win Franco and his friends from partnership with the Italian and Nazi salesmen of trouble. To defend the general interests of British capitalism, the Foreign Office may finally take a decided stand against Franco and his Italian and Nazi coaches. All in all, the ways of capitalist governments are devious and not entirely perfect.

For example, strictly neutral France, headed by the Social Democratic Blum, has been helping to finance the militarists who are doing their bloodiest to overthrow a government headed by another Social Democrat. A commercial agreement passed long before the revolt stipulates that the regulation of all commercial payments between French and Spanish businessmen should be operated through the *clearing* method. That is, French buyers of Spanish goods and Spanish buyers of French goods pay to their respective States, which pay the sellers; and finally the difference between the total purchases of the two countries is transferred from one country to another. The Pop-Front government of France has just authorized French purchasers of mineral ore mined in the Riff region to pay directly to the Riff mines, now under Franco's control, at the same time, the moneys equivalent to the purchasing prices of the products from republican Spain are not paid to Caballero's government but are held in the strong boxes of the clearing house. How do you like that?

4. I am told—I repeat this as a hearsay allegation—that Carney, the correspondent of *New York Times* has been asked to leave Madrid as a pro-rebel agent or sympathizer. Franco is angling for a loan among well-to-do Catholics in the United States, and certain American correspondents may be used to make the right publicity, with the help of doctored stories about massacres of priests and women, Russian domination of the loyalist command, etc.

5. Certainly. France and Great Britain may take a definite stand against the Spanish rebels. Much depends on certain developments within republican State. There is no doubt in my mind that the coordination of the military forces under the traditional general staff and the dissolution of the various agencies of popular control—as workers' militia, people's police, trade union domination of industry—will hasten pro-republican action by France and, especially, by Great Britain. Said, but it is so. The capitalist States know their friends and enemies. They have a dread of a people's army, which, anyhow, is a very deficient instrument of war.

## Questions on Political Forces in Spain:

1. You may guess that the two considerations given immediately above guided the Spanish anarchists in their decision to collaborate in the governmental institutions.



Yes, in Catalonia, Companys government was an empty shell for some time. The militia, the public services, public provisioning was in the hands of the radical trade union and political organizations, with the C.N.T. and F.A.I. playing a dominant role. But the continuation of this separation of the real power from the traditional State shell (the Generalita) depended on certain two important matters, in view of the violent exigencies of the moment: 1. money, 2. the attitude of the Foreign Powers. Madrid would lend its gold only to the "legal" (Companys) government. Italy made plain that the establishment of a new "Paris Commune" in Catalonia would be reason enough for intervention. The overthrow of the Companys government by the radical organizations would spell the defeat of the anti-rebel movement all over Spain.

There seemed to be another way. The C.N.T. and F.A.I. thought it was wise to put on the empty shell, but, at the same time, make enough cracks in it to allow for free action by the workers' organizations inside it. If the victory over the rebels could not be accomplished with the a "people's army," if a bureaucratically coordinated military organization was essential for victory, why not attempt to make the apparatus of coordination your own by surrounding it with the influence of your numbers. But you say that such a military-bureaucratic apparatus of repression cannot serve the propertyless in their acts of self-emancipation. True, in their self-emancipation, the workers must immediately lop off the military-bureaucratic features of the State apparatus and extend popular rule. But apparently this cannot be done in a war for life or death. Only another disciplined, efficiently moving, coordinated military apparatus, provided with bombers, tanks and heavy artillery can defeat an army possessing all these features. The Spanish workers and peasants do not like to be shot, in helpless batches, by the reactionary rebels.

2. The Russian Soviets (I am referring here only to the soldiers' councils, for only they ever wielded real State power—and only in Petrograd) were destroyed by the organization of the bureaucratically coordinated and disciplined "Red Army", which replaced the loosely acting, self-ruling armed forces of the Revolution with the development of the Russian Civil War of 1918-1919. The situation in Spain calls for a moneyed, coordinated, disciplined efficient military machine, which has the official recognition of such democratic and Communist powers as France, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. and which will not be recognized as an excuse for the invasion of Spain by such missionaries of civilization as Mussolini. The equivalent of the Russian Red Army is being developed in Spain. This cannot be stopped. The thing is for the workers' organizations to take positions of advantage so that the same necessary bureaucratically coordinated instruments of force is not used later, like the Red Army controlled by the Bolsheviks, as a club that would beat to the ground the popular councils, and strengthening the bureaucratic-military features of the State, make possible the rule of a bloody dictatorship. To the sailors of Kronstadt it mattered but little whether it was Kornilov or Trotzky who shot them down. The possibility of a bloody suppression of the F.A.I. once the forces of democracy have finally won over Franco, is not entirely precluded. The F.A.I. wants the growing numbers of syndicalists workers to ride and manipulate the engines that some good people might want to use against them after the job of defeating the rebels is done.

2. In view of this, what is the basis for your argument about *soviets*. The magic word: *soviets*. You mean a (*questioner* *is being addressed*) that popular, democratically chosen representa-

tive bodies are no good; the thing is to install *soviets*! What are *soviets*?

Ah, you mean *soviets* are such popular organizations that lend themselves to domination by your kind of statesmen. You mean that the thing to do is 1. to have *soviets*, 2. then, to shout: "All Power to the *Soviets*!" and 3. replace the self-rule of the innocent *soviets* with the arbitrary rule of the vanguard of revolutionary statesmen. That happened in Russia. Stalin 1936 is the logical product of the Russian *soviets*. But these things happen not according to plan but as a result of the combination of historic circumstances. One—only one—of the historic circumstances in the Catalonian situation is the lesson taught by the history of the Russian Revolution. Beware of the people who shout: "All power to the *Soviets*!" The tricksters want to take away all power from the *soviets*.

It is hard to have the *soviets* see the real world. For whenever they want to perceive things, the veil of the Russian Revolution descends between them and reality blinds their sight. The problem is plainly the following. The Spanish population wants to better their condition of living. An immediate task in this program is the defeat of the "facciosos", the militarist-reactionary rebels. What will happen later will depend, again, on the outlook and understanding of the great masses of the Spanish people. Many of them realize that it is best for them—not for party secretaries and professional revolutionary careerists—to keep hold on the control of things. Through the C.N.T. and the U.G.T. they are trying to make the best of the situation, which is dominated by the requirements of this war without quarter.

3. Every ship load of Russian potatoes signified the increase of the popularity and influence of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia and the Communist Party of Spain. Yes it is true that *Mundo Obrero* was confiscated one day because it contained the proposal of an armistice to the rebels. But, anyhow, the Communist Party of Spain is swallowing the Socialist Party. It has the resources and it is Bolshevik in organizational attitude; that is, its members, like Communists elsewhere, owe their first allegiance to their organization and therefore to the U.S.S.R. and do not permit themselves to be worried by the historic needs of the working class. On the other hand, in the anti-rebel field, their activity is nothing to be proud. The Communist Minister of Public Education is said to have tried to placard the city of Madrid with Soviet (probably Five Year Plan) posters to inspire the people of Madrid with the spirit of resistance! The Fifth Political Regiment is no more. It kept its eye on the bad syndicalists too long.

4. Yes the *Poumists* have slipped; they are no longer the perfect Bolshevik-Leninist-Trotskyite revolutionists. They do not come up to Paris and Brussels specifications. They, too, argue a bit like the F.A.I. The F.A.I., of course, has no ruler. It has an object. The *Poumists* are starting to say: "Rules be damned!" No, the influence of the P.O.U.M. is not increasing. They are not approved of by the Soviet consul. And the prestige of the U.S.S.R. is overwhelming in Spain, except, of course, among the F.A.I., who, not owing any allegiance to the Russian Revolution, is free to act for the interests of the working class.

5. The question that occupies you (*addressed to questioner*) is what will happen after the victory over the rebels. An answer to this question can be no more than a description of existing forces: circumstances (people, organizations, material resources and institutions) in Spain and abroad. I shall try to answer your question in the near future.



# HITLER OVER EUROPE

• Marinus van Peuthe

**E**UROPE is nervous. What makes Europe nervous? The prospect of an immediate general war. People say Hitler means.

Not long ago we were told that Russian Bolshevism meant war—"revolutionary war." Considered today, the talk of revolutionary war by the 1919-1920 Bolsheviks seems like an almost conscious subterfuge, the aim of which was to save the new regime in Russia. Governments that toyed with the desire of intervening in Russia were kept busy at home. But the tool was two-edged. Western capitalism used the bogey of world Bolshevism to squelch and disorient the post-war discontent of the laboring masses, who seemed then to awaken to some understanding of their situation in society. The Russian Revolution not only did not menace world capitalism. It indirectly helped to lengthen its days by confusing the minds of the most alert sections of the European masses. Even now many of them do not dare to regard the reality around them without first putting on their Soviet glasses. Since 1927, that is after the failure of its anti-British venture in China, the Russian Revolution has not only signified peace but has *talked* peace.

In 1933, a "bolshevized" party came to power in Germany. Its victory bore in itself the conditions of a new general European conflict. It is important to make clear why Hitler means war. From different directions, intimations are made that there are prospects of doing away with the Nazi disturbers of European peace. There is talk of an offer of reconciliation and friendship from a power considered to be the chief enemy of the Third Reich. How correct and feasible are these possibilities?

About six months ago there was published in Switzerland a book bearing the intriguing title *Ich kann nicht schweigen* (I Cannot Keep Quiet). Its author is the perennial "Anonymous", who, as vouched by a Swiss official, is said to be a prominent reactionary German politician, active in public life from the close of the World War to 1935, a collaborator of Hitler, and who, now disgusted by his discovery of the real nature of the Nazi dictatorship, has broken with the latter and is predicting its early end.

The book deals specifically with the backstage of the Reichstag fire and the purge of June 1934. Much of the material it presents has already been whispered and written by various opponents of the Hitler-Goering set. It contains a protest—qualified as a "moral-juridic" protest—against the unscrupulous personalities and the ruthless and dishonorable methods of the Nazi organization, described as a robber band sitting on prosperous Germany. Who will save Germany from the gangsters that kidnapped her? The Reichswehr, standing above all parties, guided by the old monarchist and rightist elements, who do not forget the fine old German traditions, will rescue Germany.

A similar hope has been repeatedly expressed in the organ of a political group that has little to do with the old German monarchists and rightists: *Deutsche Revolution* of the Black Front, which takes its stand in opposition to Hitler on the original Nazi "radical" program fathered by the murdered Gregor Strasser, Hitler's rival in the days before Hitler was the unchallenged and deified Fuehrer of his party.

The following excerpt is typical. Its variants continue to make the hearts of all German exiles beat with hope:

"From a private source we have received the following note, certain details of which are already known, but which gives an interesting view on the new differences between the army and the party:

"The antagonism between the army and the party has recently become more acute. Goebbel's and Rosenberg's provocative speeches against Russia, the increased propaganda for a war against Soviet Russia and the ideological preparation for such a war through Rosenberg's enterprises, the Institute for the Study of Russia and the Anti-Comintern directed by Dr. A. Ehrt, have brought the General Staff to protest officially against such incendiary activity on the part of the party leadership. The army supported in this respect by the Foreign Minister von Neurath, who had indicated before the harmful influence of such propaganda abroad.

"That the protest of the general staff is quite earnest is shown by a specific gesture. Upon the termination of the Autumn manoeuvres, the general staff gave a dinner in the honor of the foreign military attachés. Various speeches were made at this dinner and in these speeches the usual amenities were exchanged. One speech, however, passed beyond the usual perfunctoriness. It was no other than that of General von Fritsch, the head of the General Staff. Expressing himself on the spur of the moment, he referred warmly to the Russian military attaché, Orloff, and raised his glass to drink a toast to the well being of Russia, its army and its leaders! This extraordinary and pointed rebuke aimed at the anti-Russian stand and propaganda of the party, threw the latter into consternation."

The private reporter goes on to emphasize that the military forces, and especially its chiefs, do not at all identify themselves with the anti-Russian line of the party. "True it is that the air force is in the hands of Goering, who would start the war against Russia this very day, and true it is that the Reich War Minister is Field Marshal von Blomberg, a man trusted by Hitler. But things appear to look different to General von Fritsch, who as a conservative-monarchist, takes, in accordance with the Bismarckian tradition, a friendly position toward Russia."

But it appears, continues to note the reporter, that the army is also taking a stand of specific opposition to the Party as such. On the 1st of February 1936, came the important order on the "Employment of the Armed Forces." This order accords to the army the task of pacifying the country in the case of internal disorders. It is aimed directly at the influence of Himmler's SS corps and therefore the Nazi Party. And against the Nazi Party and its creature the Gestapo was directed also the creation, in September 1936, of a Supreme Court Martial, subtracting all army cases from the jurisdiction of the People's and Reich Supreme Courts, both of which are dominated by the Party and the Gestapo. The latest proof of the growing independence of the army is the fact that the Hamburg-Fuhlsbuettel concentration camp has been taken away from the SS and put under the direction of the Reichswehr. Etc. Etc.

Here hope chooses the attitude of the conservative-monarchist military bureaucracy as an instrument. But usually an anti-Hitler organ like *Deutsche Revolution* locates salvation, that is to say the beginning of an internal collapse of the Nazi machine, in a supposed near revolt of the old Nazi élite (represented by the SS!) against the Goering-Schacht pack of servitors to the "International Bankers." The latter theme is more in consonance with the "anti-capitalist" outlook of the disappointed Nazi radicals, who feel that the original program of National Socialism has been subverted by Hitler, a prophet misled by Goering and Schacht.



It may seem surprising to find a similar line picked up by the Communist Party of Germany, the organization that from 1929 to 1933 recognized political democracy in general, and the Social-Democracy in particular, as the chief obstacles to its victory (said to be the victory of the German proletariat); which up to Hitler's accession to power claimed grandiloquently that the various opponents of Nazism could only find a common front within the Communist Party of Germany; and which, for some time after Hitler's first electoral success, saw his influence waning and itself come to power in a great and joyful mass upheaval. We have here apparently the newest revision of the Popular Front policy of the Communists (that is, of the Soviet Union). For the new Communist stand on Germany, embodied in an "appeal to the German people" (published in No. 31, October 18, 1936 of *Deutsche Volkszeitung*) parallels almost word for word a similar appeal to the Italian people.

Guided by the text of Lenin and the living exegesis of his genial vicar on earth, neither the Communist Party of Germany nor the Communist Party of Italy, both housed in Moscow, can go wrong at the present time, as they did not go wrong heretofore. Mussolini, a wayward friend of Russia, the first European power to recognize the Soviet State, needs to be set right and reassured. What is behind the "appeal to the people of Germany?" Is it a genuine offer of peace to Hitler's party? Is it one of the famous "Bolshevik-realist" tactical maneuvers that cost the workers of the world so much blood and the working population of the Soviet Union so much sweat and hunger before? Is it, as is being intimated in some circles, a prelude to a Soviet offer of closer collaboration between the two coordinated States?

The Communist appeal calls on the German people to get together in order to complete the Nazi revolution. Before their victory, the Nazis went to the German people with the following issues: the solution of the unemployment problem, a "fair wage" to workers, liberation from *Zinsknechtschaft* (taxation slavery) and "just prices" to the peasants, freedom from the chains of the Versailles treaty to the nation, and general indefinite "anti-capitalism." Interwoven with all these issues was that of anti-Semitism. (The Jew was responsible for everything: low wages, high taxes, the Versailles treaty and the domination of the international bankers.) The C. P. G. apparently concludes now that, as far as the German people is considered, the Nazis have solved unemployment, and wiped away the shame of Versailles. The appeal is, therefore made to all Germans—Nazis, Communists, Social Democrats, workers, peasants, intellectuals—to get together to make real a "fair wage," "just prices" and freedom from taxation slavery. The achievement of the Nazi program by the reconciled brothers is to be accomplished on the basis of a narrowed typically Nazi anti-capitalism, opposition to 3,000 millionaires interested in the German armaments industry and therefore interested in a war against the Soviet Union.

"The 3,000 millionaires headed by the old reactionary Schacht, who in the year 1924 signed the Dawes Tribute Plan, have inconsiderately put their privileges above everything.

"The 3,000 millionaires have already once sent Germany to defeat.

"The 3,000 millionaires are now interested in another war, because they make billions in the production of armaments.

"The 3,000 millionaires want to keep wages low, so that their profits might grow.

"The 3,000 millionaires pit one section of the people against

another, so that they might remain on top and continue making their big profits. "

"Must this be so, German People?

"We can change this, if we get together. What a great might are the millions of the people against the thin layer of 3,000 millionaires!

"Let us all become reconciled, so that the will of the people might be law, and not the selfishness of 3,000 millionaires.

"You National Socialist (Nazi), you Social Democrat, you Catholic, you Communist, you Worker, you Peasant, you Artisan, you Intellectual—have not you all, children of the German nation, the same yearning to live in peace, joy and well-being? Have we all not today the same needs?

"Let us come together in true comradeship to defend our life interests and peace, to defend Germany against the rapacious top layer of 3,000 millionaires!"

Let us not waste time and words in such *simplicist* arguments, such as: the idea of a "fair wage" and "just prices" are utopian and un-Marxist; Feder's "freedom from taxation slavery" is idiotic, or is a piece of demogogy; the appeal limits itself to opposition to the 3,000 munition lords, forgetting the rest of the capitalist class, the 15,000 big land owners and the military bureaucracy. Let us not complain that the "appeal" does not seem to say a word against the Nazi domination as such, while even the exiled Nazi radicals (Dr. Otto Strasser and his comrades) never write an article on their homeland without finishing it off with "The Hitler system must die so that Germany and Europe might live!" The appeal is addressed to the German people: Nazis and all. It is laughable, of course, to presume that its writers hoped it would really reach and influence the German people. The appeal is meant for the Nazi government. It is an olive branch to Hitler. It says: "We can live in peace in Nazi Germany. We Communists are ready to cooperate with the Nazi Government. All that needs to be done is the following. Squelch the 3,000 millionaires who are interested in a war against the U.S.S.R."

Indeed, the current rumor emanating from more or less inspired sources is that the appeal, if received seriously, will be followed with a definite offer of increased economic collaboration between the two countries. Here, too, a leaf would be taken from the catechism of the "radical" Nazi exiles. Dr. Strasser, from his haven in Czecho-Slovakia, assures the world that to the "Germany of tomorrow"—that is, the Germany dominated by his group, the self-styled "real" National Socialists—it would not matter who held power in the Kremlin, as long as the interests of both countries were served. Russia's export trade monopoly is basically the cause for the friction between Germany and Russia. But even now the Soviet monopoly is being matched by Hitler's export trade monopoly in Germany. Hitler's present political policy on the Soviet Union does not serve the economic welfare of Germany. From a military viewpoint, his anti-Soviet policy is catastrophically dangerous to Germany. The industries of Germany need the demand of huge Russia. This demand cannot be gotten through conquest. Germany may be irreparably destroyed in such an attempt. But this demand can be gotten through economic collaboration, that is, the elaboration of the Rathenau policy toward Russia, which has not been entirely abandoned by Hitler's government.

No, runs the rumor. Russia would not be averse to becoming Hitler's "economic partner." It still needs German technique and science. It has progressed economically beyond the level of a colony country. There is no danger of its thus falling under the domination of more advanced Germany. As for what other people will think—if the Nazi government persists, if it is not



soon overthrown, it will have to take on more "humanist" clothing, that is, do what the Soviet party dictatorship is attempting to do, and apparently successfully, with the aid of the masquerade of the new constitution. And neither will the dominant position of the Soviet rulers become safer in a war, and they have Siberia to lose.

What can we say to that?

The National Socialist Party was given State power by a movement of social discontent that sought satisfaction in the program of radical social reform, the main features of which are given above. The possibilities of its continuing in power depend on its possibilities of manipulating the same social discontent. After its victory, the bolshevized Nazi party (organized in a pyramidal hierarchy of leaders, appointed and controlled from the top to the bottom) fastened itself parasitically to the economic and political body of Germany. The Nazi bureaucracy enjoys its power. After it has won power by the means of promises that referred especially to internal affairs, the Nazi hierarchy postponed the realization of the paradise promised to the German people, on the plea that the outer enemies interfered. And in the field of foreign politics, the Nazis won victory after victory and that seems to flatter a lot the German people. The Versailles shame wiped out. A strong, armed Germany. That is grand, say very many Germans. "The paradise promised to us depends on our winning over the exterior enemies who do not want us to expand. To prepare for a victorious war that will make possible a paradise in Germany, we must suffer a bit now."

Hitler won these diplomatic victories because Great Britain and France want peace—now. A war would put the Nazi regime in peril. Hitler is not really obliged to risk his regime in a war, yet he must continue to gamble on the foreign political scene in order to divert the attention of the German nation from its internal troubles. (A similar game has been played by the Bolshevik bureaucracy.) The peace offer expected of the Soviet State may offer Hitler a way out of his dilemma. But if he accepts the offer of peace and closer economic collaboration, he must perforce extend government ownership and control in Germany. Only this way could meet the influence of the Soviet State economic monopoly. This would lead him into difficulties with the German industrialists as well as with the 15,000 big landholders. The latter hoped to divert the land hunger of the German peasant with the territorial conquest to the east (immediately, Poland; eventually, the Ukraine). Hitler receives the special backing of those branches of industry that profit from the limitation of foreign competition and from war preparation. The big landholders appreciate his continuation of Hindenburg's policy of subsidy to the East Prussian estates. Roehm and his followers were rubbed out because they imperiled the Nazi regime by attempting to force Hitler's hand and have him put in motion the "socialist" part of the party program. In general it remains true that the Nazi hierarchy will follow the line that, under the given circumstances, seems to assure their survival in power as parasites living on the country. It is possible that the "Fourth Year Plan," now being introduced with Koehler's declaration that capitalism has come to an end in Germany, is the beginning of a more rapid institution in Germany of the Soviet sort of socialism (State ownership in the benefit of a hierarchy of "responsibles.")

To survive, Hitler's régime must choose between the friendship of Great Britain or Russia. It cannot successfully oppose both. And in the imperialist arena it is Great Britain that is the chief rival of Germany.

## LENIN AS A PHILOSOPHER

• Simone Weil

**M**ATERIALISM AND EMPIRIOCITICISM, the only work published by Lenin on the question of pure philosophy, is directed against Mach and his avowed or non-avowed disciples within the ranks of the Social Democracy, especially its Russian branch, in 1908. The best known of Mach's Russian disciples was Bagdanov. Lenin examines in this book the doctrines of his opponents, all of whom, with varying degrees of subtlety, tried to solve the problem of knowledge by suppressing the notion of an object exterior to the mind. Lenin shows in his study that these doctrines, once divested of their pretentious phraseology, are seen to be derived from Berkeley's idealism, that is, from the negation of the exterior world. He offers in contrast to this viewpoint the materialism of Marx and Engels. In this polemic, Lenin gives proof again to his usual indefatigable industriousness and his taste for serious documentation. It is easy to explain the importance of such a discussion. One cannot claim to take a stand on the basis of "scientific socialism" without having a clear idea of what is science, that is, without first posing in clear terms the problem of knowledge, the relation of thought to its object. However, Lenin's work is almost as wearisome and uninteresting as the usual manual of philosophy. This is due, to some extent, to the mediocrity of his opponents, but especially to Lenin's method.

Lenin studied philosophy in 1899, while in Siberia, and then in 1908, when he was preparing the mentioned book—with the specific aim of refuting the theoreticians of the labor movement who wanted to abandon Engels' materialism. His method may be described as follows: He reflects in order to refute, the solution being given beforehand. And by what power is the wanted solution supplied? By the Party, just as it is furnished to the Catholic by his Church. For "the theory of knowledge, like political economy, is, in our contemporary society, a *party science*."

It cannot be denied that there is a close bond between theoretic culture and the division of society into classes. Every oppressive society gives birth to a false conception of the relations of man and nature—merely as a result of the fact that in such a society the only persons who are in direct contact with nature are the exploited, that is to say, the persons excluded from theoretic culture and deprived of the ability and the right to express themselves. Inversely, the false conception thus formed tends to perpetuate the oppression of the period in so far as it makes this separation between labor and thought appear legitimate. In this sense, a philosophic system and a conception of science may be recognized as reactionary or bourgeois. But that is not how Lenin understood the matter. He did not say: "Such a conception deforms the real relation of man to the world. It is therefore reactionary." He said instead: "Such a conception deviates from materialism, leads to idealism, justifies religion. It is therefore reactionary, false." The important thing for him was not to see clearly in his own thought but merely to maintain intact the philosophic traditions on which the Party lived. Such a method of thought is not that of a free man. But how could have Lenin reflected otherwise? As soon as a party finds itself cemented, not only by the coordination of action, but also by the unity of doctrine, it becomes impossible for a good party member to think any other way than as a slave. The stifling regime that is weighing now on the Russian people is already implied, in



germ, in the attitude taken by Lenin toward his own thinking. Long before it had robbed entire Russia of the liberty of thought, the Bolshevik Party had taken it away from its own chief.

Happily, Marx followed another method of thought. In spite of a number of polemics that added nothing to his glory, he usually sought first to put order in his own thinking rather than merely to reduce his opponents to powder. He learned from Hegel that, instead of refuting incomplete conceptions, it was preferable to "overcome them by conserving them." Thus Marx's thinking differs quite noticeably from the of the "Marxists", Engels not excepted. And nowhere does that difference appear more striking than in Lenin's solution of the problem of knowledge, or putting it in more general terms, in his solution of the problem of the relation between the mind and the world.

To explain how it happens that the mind knows the world, we can either represent the world as a simple creation of the mind or we can represent the mind as one of the products of the world, a product which, by chance inexplicable is the image or the reflection of the world. Lenin posits that all philosophy must be led back to either of these two conceptions and he, it is understood, chooses the second. He cites Engels' formula, according to which thought and consciousness "are the products of the human brain, man being himself a product of nature," so that "all products of the human brain, being essentially the products of nature, far from being in contradiction with the whole of nature, correspond to it." And he repeats to satiety that this correspondance consists in that the products of the human brain are—apparently thanks to Providence—the photographs, the images, the reflections, of nature. As if the thoughts of a crazy man were not, by the same token, the "products of nature!"

Now the two conceptions, between which Lenin wants to oblige us to choose, proceed from the same method. In order to solve more easily the problem, each suppresses the other of the two terms. One suppresses the world, the object of knowledge; the other suppresses the mind, the subject of knowledge. Both deprive knowledge of all significance. But if we did not merely want to construct a theory but wanted to become aware of the condition in which man really finds himself, we should not ask how it happens that the world is known, but how, in fact, does man know the world. In that case, it would be necessary to recognize the existence of a world which reaches beyond the mind and of a mind which, far from passively reflecting the world, acts on it both to know it and to change it. That was the method of Descartes, whom, it is significant, Lenin's book does not even mention by name. And that, without doubt, was Marx's approach.

It may be objected that Marx never said he was in disagreement with the philosophic doctrine exposed by Engels and that Marx had read *Anti-Duehring* in manuscript and approved it. But this merely signifies that Marx never took the time to reflect enough on these problems to take into consideration what separated him from Engels. The whole work of Marx is impregnated with a spirit which is evidently incompatible with the vulgar materialism presented by Engels and Lenin. He never considered man as a simple part of nature but also—since he exercised a free activity—as a term antagonistic toward nature. In a study of Spinoza, he expressly reproached the latter for confusing man with nature, having the latter contain man, instead of opposing the two. In his *Theses On Feurbach*, he wrote:

"The chief lack of all materialistic philosophy up to the present, including that of Feurbach, is that the thing, the reality, sensation, is only conceived of under the form of the object, of con-

templation, but not as human activity making an impression on the senses, as *praxis*, in a subjective way. That is why the active side has been developed, it is true, abstractly, in opposition to materialism—which, of course, does not know real, tangible activity as such."

Although these formulae are quite obscure, they at least state clearly that it is necessary to make a synthesis of idealism and materialism, a synthesis safeguarding a radical opposition between passive nature and human activity. Indeed, Marx refuses to conceive pure thought supposedly exercised without any contact with nature. But a doctrine which makes the whole of man a simple product of nature, and of his thought, a simple reflection of nature, has nothing in common with a conception which shows that reality appears at the point of contact of thought and the world, that is in the act by which the thinking man possesses himself of the world.

It is in accordance with the latter outlook that we must interpret historic materialism, which signifies, as explained by Marx at length in his *German Ideology*, that thoughts formed by man in given social, economic and technical conditions respond, in the manner that they act on nature, by producing their own conditions of existence.

It is from this conception that the very notion of the proletarian revolution must be inferred. For the essence of the capitalist order consists, as has been forcefully shown by Marx, in reversing the "relation between the subject and the object," a reversal constituted by the subordination of the subject to the object, of the "laborer to the material conditions of labor." And this revolution can have no other purpose than that of reconstituting to the thinking subject the relation that he ought to take toward matter by giving him back the domination the exercise of which is his natural function.

It is not at all surprising that the Bolshevik Party—whose organization has always been based on the subordination of the individual, and which, once in power, was to subject the worker to the machine as much as previous capitalism—adopted for its doctrine Engels' naive materialism rather than Marx's philosophy. It is not at all astonishing that Lenin should hold to a purely polemical method and should prefer to embarrass his opponents with all sorts of difficulties, rather than to show how his materialist philosophy could have avoided analogous difficulties. A quotation from *Anti-Duehring* replaces for Lenin all analyses. But not by speaking with contempt of "long refuted errors of Kant" can he keep the *Critique of Pure Reason* from being, in spite of its lacunae, much more instructive than *Anti-Duehring* to a person who wishes to reflect on the problem of knowledge. And we cannot but laugh when we see Lenin, who always invoked "dialectical materialism" as a complete doctrine capable of solving everything, avow, in a fragment dealing with dialectics, that so far there have been only attempts to vulgarize dialectics and no attempt to verify their correctness by the history of the sciences.

Such a work (*Materialism and Empiriocriticism*) is therefore a rather distressing sign of the poverty of the socialist movement in the domain of pure theory. We cannot console ourselves by saying that political and social action is more important than philosophy. The revolution must be an intellectual revolution as much as it is a social revolution. Purely theoretic speculation has its task in it. We can avoid this task only under the peril of rendering the rest impossible.

All authentic revolutionaries have understood that revolution implies the diffusion of knowledge in the entire population. On this point there is complete agreement between Blanqui, who



judges communism to be impossible before the "lights" have been spread, Bakounine, who wanted to see science, according to his admirable formula, "become one with the real and immediate life of all individuals," and Marx, for whom socialism was, above all, the abolition of the "degrading division of labor into intellectual work and manual work." However, there does not seem to be an understanding as to what are the conditions of such a transformation. Sending all citizens to high schools or universities till the age of eighteen or twenty would be a feeble remedy, or rather no remedy, for the state of things from which we suffer. The problem would be easy if it were simply a question of vulgarizing the knowledge, supplied to us by our scientific specialists. Of the science of today only the results can be vulgarized, so that they who have the illusion of instructing are obliged to believe without themselves really knowing. The methods of science which constitute the very soul of science, remain by their very essence impenetrable to the layman, and consequently also to scientists, whose specialization makes laymen of all scientists outside of the given restricted field. Thus, just as the worker, in modern production, must subordinate himself to the material conditions of work, so thought, in scientific investigation, must subordinate itself nowadays to the given results of science. Science, which was to make us understand all things and dispel all mysteries, has itself become the mystery par excellence. This has reached such a point that obscurity, yes absurdity, is recognized in scientific theory of today as a sign of profundity. Science has become the most modern form of man's consciousness that has not as yet been recovered or has been lost again, as expressed by Marx in his fine formula for religion. If it is true, as Marx wrote in his youth that "the universal soul of the bureaucracy is the secret, the mystery, inside of the hierarchy itself, and is opposed to the outside by its nature as a closed body," there is no question that contemporary science is quite fit to serve as a theology to a society growing more and more bureaucratic. More generally, every privilege, and consequently every form of oppression, has, as its condition of existence, knowledge that is essentially impenetrable to the working masses, who are thus obliged to believe just as they are compelled to obey. In our time religion cannot sufficiently fill this role; it has been replaced by science. Therefore Marx's fine formula concerning the critique of religion should be extended also to modern science. Socialism cannot even be thought of as long as science has not been stripped of its mystery.

Years ago, Descartes believed that he founded a science without mystery, that is to say a science having enough unity and simplicity of method to make its most complicated parts merely longer but not more difficult to understand than its simplest parts, and therefore permitting any person to understand how the results he himself did not have the time to reach were found. Each result was to be given with the method that led to its discovery, so that every schoolboy might have the feeling of discovering the science over again. The same Descartes drafted the project of a School of Arts and Trades in which each artisan would learn fully the theoretic foundations of his own trade. We may say that in the field of culture, Descartes showed himself to be more of a socialist than all the disciples of Karl Marx. But, he accomplished what he wanted only in a very small measure, and he, quite vainly, betrayed this outlook by publishing a *Geometry* that was willfully obscure. No scientists after him tried to undermine their own caste privileges. The intellectuals in the labor movement have not even thought of attacking this indispensable task. A hard and crushing task, to be sure,—implying a critical revision of the whole of science,

and especially of mathematics, where the quintessence of mystery has taken refuge—but a task that is clearly posed by the very notion of socialism; a task the achievement of which, independent from the exterior conditions and the situation of the labor movement, depends only on those who will dare to undertake it; a task so important that one step taken towards its achievement may perhaps be more important to humanity and the proletariat than many partial victories in the domain of "action". However, when the theoreticians of the labor movement leave for a moment the domain of practical action, or that vain fluttering in the midst of tendencies, fractions and sub-fractions which yields them the illusion of action, they do not at all think of undermining the privileges of the intellectual caste. Far from doing or wanting to do that, they elaborate a complicated and mysterious doctrine which serves to uphold bureaucratic oppression inside the labor movement. In this sense, philosophy is really, as Lenin said, a party matter.

Translated by J. Haddon

## books

### L'HOMME EST IL HUMAN?

(Is Man Human?) By Ramon Fernández. Librairie Gallimard, Paris

IN THIS volume Fernández attempts to determine the relation existing between thought and action. In this age stylists and weavers of words have taken the clarity of Marx as a subject of their exegesis. Such writing, too, may, therefore, be recognized as "Marxist." I do not dare to ask what Fernández means. I give his chief conclusions:

"The philosophers of all times have loved to construct beautiful palaces of ideas, to refine norms of reason, which they offered as models. (But that was never a proper and essential function of thought. Thought has been made to bite into things, to modify the world through the exercise of a progressively clearer recognition of the world. An harmonious ideal is only an aesthetic frame whose content has to be determined. In every philosopher, alongside of the artist of ideas who perfects the form of his thought, there is a scientist and a reformer. For the very structure of an idea implies an active orientation, an event separate from the idea, although the idea remains imminent to the former.

"In an epoch when social reflection is predominant, every rational change of the world can only be conceived factually. I mean only by a real change of society in its material structure, and not only by a simple change in the mental structure or in some particular mental phenomena. A movement of thought that claims to be independent from the economic process loses contact with the living reality of the world.

"That is the meaning of the famous judgement of Marx that philosophy ought to cease explaining the world and should occupy itself with the task of changing it. But the proposition is equivocal, for every philosophy has always implied a wish to change the world, with differences established on the basis of a great division between the representation of value and the representation of the change. In that respect, Marx is the direct heir to the philosophers of the 18th century. It is only in Marx's time that the consciousness of the identity of thought and action has reached its maturity. The opposition of idealism to materialism



that is supported by certain Marxists may possibly be accepted as a polemical procedure, but it is really an error in logic as well as an error or interpretation. For dialectical materialism is closely joined to ethical idealism. It constitutes the technique of the latter, so to speak.

"I hold that the importance of Marx is such that no positive organization of the world is possible without a clear knowledge of his thought. But the polemical genius of Marx has harmed his philosophical genius by permitting variable and contrary interpretation of his thought. This hinders the understanding of his message.

"It is not my intention in this treatise to discuss Marx but neither is it possible to be silent on the thought of the greatest humanist of modern times in a study of humanism. Especially since certain revolutionists have gone so far as denouncing humanism in his name! Marx is certainly a revolutionary, but he is not a revolutionist. In the proletarian conquest of the State it is not the break with the past that is important for Marx. On the contrary, he sees in this conquest the completion and blooming forth of a very ancient humanist tradition. He has never claimed to have overthrown the moral values of the West. On the contrary, according to him, these values will only be realized in a classless society. His system does not offer variations towards an unknown. His system strives to establish truth, in the strictly rational sense of the word. For Marx, the conflict of human forces, led back to its philosophic essence, is the classic 19th century conflict between reason and religion. He writes: 'What a given country is for the gods brought from abroad is the country of reason for God in general. It is a

region where his existence ceases.' Here is the most vigorous and clearest formula of modern humanism.

"More, Marx's economic criticism is directly joined to his criticism of religion. He believes that religious consciousness is an erroneous consciousness, producing a false view of the world. How are we to free ourselves from this error? 'To insist on renouncing illusions concerning our own situation is to insist on renouncing a situation that has need of illusions.' Illusions—such are the forms of idealism that Marx denounces, in the name of a radical idealism. And thus the revolution makes a connection with humanism. Thus economics appear to be the motor of revolution. 'In order to bring the worker to produce surplus value and furnish surplus labor it is necessary to coerce him to spend all the labor power he is capable of, so that he will earn what he must have in order to live.' This disproportion between the labor and the income of the worker proves that capitalism, even if it were necessary in order to industrialize the world, is incapable of organizing it humanely. In view of this, a humanist who has taken cognizance of the conditions of reality, must necessarily take a stand against capitalism. Moreover, this labor power is creative. It is, indeed, the only creative element in the process of production. 'The workers' labor *augments* the reality and the value of the universe, and this reality, this value, do not reappear in the worker's wages. What would you say about a dealer in paintings who paid the painter the wages of a scrubwoman? It is this, however, which makes capitalism, in the measure that human labor is creative. This measure Marx first established. He has generalized the *poetic* quality of human labor."

## REFORM OR REVOLUTION

• Rosa Luxemburg

### COOPERATIVES, UNIONS, POLITICAL DEMOCRACY (concluded)

If foreign politics push the bourgeoisie into the arms of reaction, this is no less true about domestic politics—thanks to the rise of the working class. Bernstein shows that he recognizes this when he makes the social-democratic "legend" which "wants to swallow everything"—in other words, the socialist efforts of the working class—responsible for the desertion of the liberal bourgeoisie. He advises the proletariat to disavow its socialist aim, so that the mortally frightened liberals might come out of the mousehole of reaction. Making the suppression of the socialist labor movement an essential condition for the preservation of bourgeois democracy, he proves in a striking manner that this democracy is in complete contradiction with the inner tendency of development of the present society. He proves at the same time that the socialist movement is itself a *direct product* of this tendency.

But he proves, at the same time, still another thing. By making the renouncement of the socialist aim an essential condition of the resurrection of bourgeois democracy, he shows how inexact is the claim that bourgeois democracy is an indispensable condition of the socialist movement and the victory of socialism. Bernstein's reasoning exhausts itself in a vicious circle. His conclusion swallows his premises.

The solution is quite simple. In view of the fact that bourgeois liberalism has given up its ghost from fear of the growing

labor movement and its final aim, we conclude that the socialist labor movement is today the *only* support for that which is not the goal of the socialist movement—democracy. We must conclude that democracy can have no other support. We must conclude that the socialist movement is not bound to bourgeois democracy but that, on the contrary, the fate of democracy is bound up with the socialist movement. We must conclude from this that democracy does not acquire greater chances of life in the measure that the working class renounces the struggle for its emancipation but that, on the contrary, democracy acquires greater chances of survival as the socialist movement becomes sufficiently strong to struggle against the reactionary consequences of world politics and the bourgeois desertion of democracy. He who would strengthen democracy should want to strengthen and not weaken the socialist movement. He who renounces the struggle for socialism renounces both the labor movement and democracy.

### CONQUEST OF POLITICAL POWER

*This is the eighth chapter of "Reform or Revolution"*

THE FATE of democracy is bound-up, we have seen, with the fate of the labor movement. But does the development of democracy render superfluous or impossible a proletarian revolution, in the sense of the taking of State power, in the sense of the conquest of the political power.

Bernstein settles the question by weighing minutely the good and bad sides of social reform and social revolution. He does it almost in the same manner in which cinnamon or pepper is



weighed out in a consumers' cooperative store. He sees the legislative course of historic development as the action of intelligence, while the revolutionary course of historic development is for him the action of feeling. Reformist activity, he recognizes as a slow method of historic progress, revolution as a rapid method of progress. In legislation he sees a methodic force; in revolution, a spontaneous force.

We have known for a long time that the small-bourgeois reformer finds "good" and "bad" sides in everything. He nibbles a bit at all grasses. But the real course of events is little affected by such combinations. The carefully gathered little pile of the "good sides" of all things possible collapses at the first fillip of history. Historically, legislative reform and the revolutionary method function in accordance with influences that are much more profound than the consideration of the advantages or inconveniences of one method or another.

In the history of bourgeois society, legislative reform served to strengthen progressively the ascending class till the latter was sufficiently strong to seize political power, to suppress the entire existing juridical system, and to construct itself a new one. Bernstein, thundering against the conquest of political power as a theory of Blanquist violence, has the misfortune of labelling as a Blanquist error that which has always been the pivot and the motive force of human history. From the first appearance of class societies, having the class struggle as the essential content of their history, the conquest of political power has been the aim of all rising classes. Here is the starting point and end of every historic period. This can be seen in the long struggle of the Latin peasantry against the financiers and nobility of ancient Rome, in the struggle of the medieval nobility against the bishops and in the struggle of the artisans against the nobles, in the cities of the Middle Ages. In modern times, we see it in the struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudalism.

Legislative reform and revolution are not different methods of historic development that can be picked out at pleasure from the counter of history, just as one chooses hot or cold sausages. Legislative reform and revolution are different *factors* in the development of class society. They condition and complete each other, and are at the same time reciprocally exclusive, as are the north and south poles, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Every legal constitution is the *product* of a revolution. In the history of classes, revolution is the act of political creation, while legislation is the political expression of the life of a society that has already come into being. Work for reform does not contain its own force, independent from revolution. During every historic period, work for reforms is carried on only in the direction given to it by the impetus of the last revolution, and continues as long as the impulsion of the last revolution continues to make itself felt. Or to put it more concretely, in each historic period, work for reforms is carried on only in the framework of the social form created by the last revolution. Here is the kernel of the problem.

It is contrary to history to represent work for reforms as a long-drawn out revolution and revolution as a condensed series of reforms. A social transformation and a legislative reform do not differ according to their duration but according to their content. The secret of historic change through the utilization of political power resides precisely in the transformation of simple quantitative modifications into a new quality, or to speak more concretely, in the passage of an historic period from one given form of society to another.

That is why people who pronounce themselves in favor of

the method of legislative reform *in place of* and *in contradistinction to* the conquest of political power and social revolution, do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but a *different* goal. Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society they take a stand for surface modifications of the old society. If we follow the political conceptions of revisionism, we arrive at the same conclusion that is reached when we follow the economic theories of revisionism. Our program becomes not the realization of *socialism* but the reform of *capitalism*, not the suppression of the system of wage labor but the diminution of exploitation, that is, the suppression of the abuses of capitalism instead of the suppression of capitalism itself.

Does the reciprocal role of legislative reform and revolution apply only to the class struggles of the past? Is it possible that now, as a result of the development of the bourgeois juridical system, the function of moving society from one historic phase to another belongs to the legislative reform, and the conquest of State power by the proletariat has really become "an empty phrase," as Bernstein put it?

The every opposite is true. What distinguishes bourgeois society from other class societies—from ancient society and from the social order of the Middle Ages? Precisely the fact that class domination does not rest on "acquired rights" but on *real economic relations*—the fact that wage labor is not a juridical relation but purely an economic relation. In our juridical system there is not a single legal formula for the class domination of today. The few remaining traces of such formulae for class domination are (as that concerning servants) survivals of feudal society.

How can wage slavery be suppressed the "legislative way" if it is not expressed in laws? Bernstein, who would do away with capitalism by means of legislative reform, finds himself in the same situation as Ouspensky's Russian policeman who tells: "Quickly I seized the rascal by the collar! But what do I see? The confounded fellow has no collar!" And that precisely is Bernstein's difficulty.

"All previous societies were based on an antagonism between an oppressing class and an oppressed class" (*Communist Manifesto*). But in the preceding phases of modern society, this antagonism was expressed in distinctly determined juridical relations and could, especially because of that, accord, to a certain degree, a place to new relations within the framework of the old. "In the midst of serfdom, the serf raised himself to the rank of a member of the town community" (*Communist Manifesto*). How was that made possible? It was made possible by the progressive suppression of all feudal privileges in the environs of the city: the corvée, the right to special dress, the inheritance tax, the lord's claim to the best cattle, the personal levy, marriage under duress, the right to succession, etc., which all together constituted serfdom.

The same way, the small bourgeoisie of the Middle Ages succeeded in raising itself, while it was still under the yoke of feudal absolutism, to the rank of the bourgeoisie (*Communist Manifesto*). By what means? By means of the formal partial suppression or complete loosening of the corporative bonds, by the progressive transformation of the fiscal administration and of the army.

Consequently, when we consider the question from the abstract viewpoint, not from the historic viewpoint, we can *imagine* (in view of the former class relation) a legal passage, according to the reformist method, from feudal society to bourgeois society. But what do we see in reality. In reality, we see that legal



reforms not only did not obviate the seizure of political power by the bourgeoisie but have, on the contrary, prepared for it and led to it. A formal social-political transformation was indispensable for the abolition of slavery, as well as for the complete suppression of feudalism.

But the situation is entirely different now. No law obliges the proletariat to submit itself to the yoke of capitalism. Poverty, the lack of means of production, obliges the proletariat to submit itself to the yoke of capitalism. And no law in the world can give to the proletariat the means of production while it remains in the framework of bourgeois society, for not laws, but economic development have torn the means of production from the producers' possession.

And neither is the exploitation inside the system of wage labor based on laws. The level of wages is not fixed by legislation but by economic factors. The phenomenon of capitalist exploitation does not rest on a legal disposition but on the purely economic fact that labor power plays in this exploitation the role of a merchandise possessing, among other qualities, the agreeable quality of producing value and *more* than the value it consumes in the form of the laborer's means of subsistence. In short, the fundamental relations of the domination of the capitalist class cannot be transformed by means of legislative reforms, on the basis of capitalist society, because these relations have not been introduced by bourgeois laws, nor have they received the form of such laws. Apparently Bernstein is not aware of this, for he speaks of "socialist reforms." On the other hand, he seems to express implicit recognition of this when he writes on page 10 of his book that "economic motive acts freely today, while formerly it was masked by all kinds of relations of domination, by all sorts of ideology."

It is one of the peculiarities of the capitalist order that within it all the elements of the future society first assume, in their development, a form not approaching socialism but, on the contrary, a form moving more and more away from socialism. Production takes on a progressively increasing social character. But under what form is the social character of capitalist production expressed? It is expressed in the form of the large enterprises, in the form of the share-holding concern, the cartel, within which the capitalist antagonisms, capitalist exploitation, the oppression of labor power, are augmented to the extreme.

In the army, capitalist development leads to the extension of obligatory military service, to the reduction of the time of service, and consequently, to a material approach to a popular militia. But all of this takes place under the form of modern militarism, in which the domination of the people by the militarist State and the class character of the State manifest themselves most clearly.

In the field of political relations, the development of (bourgeois) democracy brings—in the measure that it finds a favorable soil—the participation of all popular strata in political life, and, consequently, some sort of "people's State." But this participation takes the form of bourgeois parliamentarism, in which class antagonisms and class domination are not done away with, but are, on the contrary, displayed in the open. Exactly because capitalist development moves through these contradictions, it is necessary to extract the kernel of socialist society from its capitalist shell. Exactly for this reason must the proletariat seize political power and suppress completely the capitalist system.

Of course, Bernstein draws other conclusions. If the development of democracy leads to the aggravation and not to the lessening of capitalist antagonisms, "the social-democracy must by all means," he answers us, "strive not to render the

task more difficult, and must not hinder the extension of democratic institutions." Indeed, that would be the right thing to do if the Social-Democracy found to its taste, in the petty-bourgeois manner, the futile task of picking for itself all the good sides of history and rejecting the supposed bad sides of history. However, in that case it should, at the same time, "try to hinder" capitalism in general, for there is no doubt that the latter is the rascal placing all these obstacles in the way of socialism. But, capitalism furnishes besides *obstacles*, also the only *possibilities* of realizing the socialist program. The same can be said about democracy.

If democracy has become superfluous or annoying to the bourgeoisie, it is on the contrary necessary and indispensable to the working class. It is necessary to the working class because it creates the political forms (autonomous administration, electoral rights, etc.) which will serve the proletariat as fulcrums in its task of transforming bourgeois society. Democracy is indispensable to the working class because only through the exercise of its democratic rights, in the struggle for democracy, can the proletariat become aware of its class interests and its historic task.

In a word, democracy is indispensable not because it renders superfluous the conquest of political power by the proletariat but because it renders this conquest of power both *necessary* and *possible*. When Engels in his preface to the *Class Struggles in France* revised the tactics of the modern labor movement and opposed the legal struggle to the barricades, he did not have in mind—this comes out of every line of the preface—the question of a definitive conquest of political power but the contemporary daily struggle. He did not have in mind the attitude that the proletariat must take toward the capitalist State at the time of its seizure of power but the attitude of the proletariat while in the bounds of the capitalist State. Engels was giving directions to the proletariat *oppressed* and not to the proletariat victorious.

On the other hand, Marx's well known sentence on the agrarian question in England (Bernstein leans on it heavily), in which he says: "We shall probably succeed easier by buying the estates of the landlords," does not refer to the stand to the proletariat *before* but *after* its victory. For there evidently can be a question of buying the property of the old dominant class only when the workers are in power. The possibility envisaged by Marx is that of the *peaceful exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat* and not the replacement of the dictatorship with capitalist social reforms. There was no doubt for Marx and Engels about the necessity of having the proletariat conquer political power. It is left to Bernstein to consider the poultry-yard of bourgeois parliamentarism as the organ by the means of which we are to realize the most formidable social transformation of history, *the passage from capitalist society to socialism*.

Bernstein introduces his theory by warning the proletariat against the danger of acquiring power too early. That is, according to Bernstein, the proletariat ought to leave the bourgeois society in its present condition and itself suffer a frightful defeat. If the proletariat came to power, it could draw from Bernstein's theory the following "practical" conclusion: to go to sleep. His theory condemns the proletariat, at the most decisive moments of the struggle, to inactivity, to a passive betrayal of its own cause.

Our program would be a miserable scrap of paper if it could not serve us in *all* eventualities, at *all* moments of the struggle, and if it did not serve us by its *application* and not by its non-application. If our program contains the formula of the historic development of society from capitalism to socialism, it must also formulate, in all its characteristic fundamentals, all the transitory



phases of this development, and it should, consequently, be able to indicate to the proletariat what ought to be its corresponding action at every moment on the road toward socialism. There can be no time for the proletariat when it will be obliged to abandon its program or be abandoned by it.

Practically, this is manifested in the fact that there can be no time when the proletariat, placed in power by the force of events, is not in the condition, or is not morally obliged, to take certain measures for the realization of its program, that is, take transitory measures in the direction of socialism. Behind the belief that the socialist program can collapse completely at any point of the dictatorship of the proletariat lurks the other belief that *the socialist program is, generally and at all times, unrealizable.*

And what if the transitory measures are premature? The question hides a great number of mistaken ideas concerning the real course of a social transformation.

In the first place, the seizure of political power by the proletariat, that is to say by a large popular class, is not produced artificially. It presupposes (with the exception of such cases as the Paris Commune, when power was not obtained by the proletariat after a conscious struggle for its goal but fell into its hands, like a good thing abandoned by everybody else) a definite degree of maturity of economic and political relations. Here we have the essential difference between coups d'état along Blanqui's conception, which are accomplished by an "active minority," and burst out like pistol shots, always inopportunistly, and the conquest of political power by a great conscious popular mass, which can only be the product of the decomposition of bourgeois society and therefore bears in itself the economic and political legitimation of its opportune appearance.

If, therefore, the conquest of political power by the working class cannot materialize itself "too early" considered from the angle of political effect, from the angle of conservation of power, the premature revolution, the thought of which keeps Bernstein from sleeping, menaces us as a sword of Damocles. Against that neither prayers nor supplication, neither scares nor any amount of anguish, are of any avail. And this for two very simple reasons.

In the first place, it is impossible to imagine that a transformation as formidable as the passage from capitalist society to socialist society can be realized in one happy act. To consider that as possible is again to give evidence to conceptions that are clearly Blanquist. The socialist transformation supposes a long and stubborn struggle, in the course of which, it is quite probable, the proletariat will be repulsed more than once, so that the first time, from the viewpoint of the final result of the struggle, it will have necessarily come to power "too early."

In the second place, it will be impossible to avoid the "premature" conquest of State power by the proletariat precisely because these "premature" attacks of the proletariat constitute a factor, and indeed a very important factor, creating the political conditions of the final victory. In the course of the political crisis accompanying its seizure of power, in the course of long and stubborn struggles, the proletariat will acquire the degree of political maturity permitting it to obtain in time a definitive victory of the revolution. Thus these "premature" attacks of the proletariat against the State power are in themselves important historic factors helping to provoke and determine the *point* of the definitive victory. Considered from this viewpoint, the idea of a "premature" conquest of political power by the laboring class appears to be a political absurdity derived from a mechanical conception of the development of society, and

positing for the victory of the class struggle a point fixed *outside and independent* from the class struggle.

Since the proletariat is not in the position to seize political power any other way than "prematurely", since the proletariat is absolutely obliged to seize power once or several times "too early" before it can maintain itself in power for good, the objection to the "premature" conquest of power is nothing more, at the bottom, than a *general opposition to the aspiration of the proletariat to possess itself of State power.* Just as all roads lead to Rome, so from this side, too, we logically arrive at the conclusion that the revisionist proposal to slight the final aim of the socialist movement is really a recommendation to renounce the social movement itself.

(The January 1936 issue of INTERNATIONAL REVIEW will contain the last two chapters of REFORM OR REVOLUTION: "Collapse" and "Opportunism in Theory and Practice.")

## BOOKS ON SOVIET RUSSIA

• Edgar L. Roof

**M**ANY BOOKS have been written about Soviet Russia.

From 1918 to 1923, most of the foreign output was quite inimical to the Soviet Republic, and told of a land where women were nationalized, churches burned, infants eaten raw by starving parents. But there were also pamphlets by the radical and Communist friends of the new Russia. These praised the achievements of the revolutionists and stressed the need of initiating similar action in the writers' native lands. Most of the books expressing disapproval of revolutionary Russia were produced by professional writers, while the books in praise of Soviet Russia were the work of publicists active in the labor movement. By 1929, there was a marked change. Novelists, poets, educators, sex emancipators, feminists, professionals of pencil and typewriter began to turn to the Soviet Union for cheering copy. The good people dealt with plans and hopes as if they were facts. They mistook the building of steel mills and power dams for the emancipation of man. But they had no time or the inclination to shuffle their copy too quizzically. For in the West the demand for glad books about Soviet Russia became great after the 1929 crash. The demand was so great that one evening at a banquet tendered to a Soviet novelist loose on a sabbatical leave from the Soviets, one famous American novelist slapped another famous American novelist in the face. It appears that the wife of the one who got slapped included in her book, written in praise of the new world being constructed in Russia, the same copy-word for word—that he, the slapper, put in his own book dealing with the new world being constructed in Russia. The great slapping novelist did not discover till a year later that he and his lady competitor had received the same mimeographed material from the Press Bureau in Moscow. That is, it was not true that the lady whose husband he slapped had stolen a carbon copy of his manuscript detailing his very perspicacious observations of the new Russia. The truth was that both had been supplied the same very perspicacious observations of new Russia by the agency supplying ready-made observations to all distinguished observers. This so soured him on the Soviet Union that he turned anti-Semitic. For it seemed to him that the innocent comrade in charge of the agency dispensing observations on new Russia was Jewish. The Jew is too often the scapegoat.

The great desire of the reading public in Western Europe and



America to read enthusiastic descriptions of life in the Soviet Union was partly the result of the huge publicity campaign carried on by the Soviet State. The latter had come to understand that revolutionary romantics did not help export trade. But the demand for happy copy on Russia was especially due to the depression, which lowered the spirit of the intellectuals of the West considerably. They were in need of a pick-up, of a fairyland to cheer them up. Now there was a boom in Russia. The promotion and building boom which began in 1928, was hard on the Russian workers and peasants, but it was kind to writers, actors, artists, publicity men, technical specialists, executives, intellectuals of all sorts. Moscow became the shrine to which intellectuals travelled from the four corners of the world.

The mention of travel to Moscow reminds me of the French surrealist poet I used to know. He had sowed his wild oats in the bonny days of post-war prosperity. He had asked and solved in verse and obscure prose such vital questions as: "Has rosewater the same virtues as cucumber juice? Is white of egg more efficacious than a piece of fresh meat left on the skin all night?" For five rollicking years he had advised the universe above and under reality to "go right ahead, my pretty chickens. Smile, drink, hope and enjoy yourselves." But on some weekend mornings, after a night of merry surrealist carousing, he would note in his public diary: "Ah, ah, ah, ah! To free love from hatred and hatred from love. The madness for work is over. No more do we race along like blind men from morning till night drawn by the implacable thread. And in a few days, we won't eat, drink or dress ourselves anymore. There will remain only soul and the body, and nothing else, because everything else will be used up."

Came the depression. His parents or other relatives, stopped sending him the usual allowance. He became cross with the cold world. He grumbled. There were other poet grumblers. He grumbled in verse. He made the right connections. He got a free trip to Russia. He stayed three weeks in the land of the Soviets, where he was completely "reforged", as he put it in his consequently published explanation of the miracle. The Soviet Union was a place where poets were treated nicely. He saw bad kulaks dig canals. He saw American engineers design and direct the construction of huge dams. He saw beautiful, beautiful tanks roll, roll down in hundreds past Lenin's mausoleum on red parade days. It was all so beautifully orderly. There was poetry in those beves of tanks, in the red parades. The Soviet poets sang about all of this. They were paid nicely and quite regularly. My friend the poet was, therefore, completely "reforged", and became a proletarian poet, rejecting outright his old allegiance to the ghost of Comte de Lautréamont. Without daring to endanger his style by reading the works of the whiskered 19th century economist, he became a very vociferous exponent of Marxism or Leninism-Marxism. Indeed, my friend the poet returned to France a full-fledged revolutionary and proletarian poet. He now sang not of rose water and cucumber juice but of tractors and collectives. And instead of the word "implacable" he made frequent use of the word "dialectical", and he ended his most effective stanzas with the abjuration: "Fight, fight, fight!" or the conjuration: "Soviets, soviets, soviets!" At times he would write satirically about the French "kulak". But two years after he had undergone his conversion from surrealism to Soviet communism, the poet went on a green drunk (he had changed over completely from absinthe to vodka), and suddenly demanded from his friends, other poets and artists on a green drunk who had also gone pro-

letarian with the depression, to give him the answer to a question that kept him awake nights:

"The workers, why are they not with us? Why do they still prefer our cheap bourgeois movies to the highly inspiring Soviet cinema? Why do they make those vulgar noises when I read to them my proletarian verses at cultural meetings at the labor unions in whose offices we had acquired jobs? All they think of is food and drink. They do not at all dream of beautiful Soviets and Collectives, taking long walks in the Russian moonlight along the blue shores of mother Volga, kissing their faithful little tractors on their revolutionary noses. Thus not only the French workers but even the Soviet heroes of labor, too. The vanguard of the world proletariat—I know, because I learned to distinguish facts—they think less of the first, second and third phases of communism, as determined by Marx in his critique and by our genial leader in his interview with Emil Ludwig, but think more of bread, butter and lodging."

It was true that while the wage workers of the world were affected only to a slight extent by the great things being done in Russia, intellectuals of all countries and categories sent their hearts and minds to the U.S.S.R. Publishers of books depend but little on workers' trade. The publishers of books discovered that serious, critical works on the Soviet Union did not sell. Correspondents like Eugene Lyons, Paul Sheffer, Chamberlain, who summarized their independent observations after a long stay in Russia, found to their surprise that their books met with small sales. Furthermore, after 1934, such works were even branded as Fascist by reviewers with a knowledge of the likes and dislikes of the book market. On the other hand, writers who, like the slapping novelist and his lady rival, merely reworked the ready material handed to them by the Soviet bureaux of enlightenment for enthusiastic foreigners, produced books that sold in great quantities and were usually labelled as "most significant works after Marx's *Das Kapital*." Less serious products as Tcherniavin's *Escape from the Soviets* and her husband's *I Speak for the Silent* received much publicity, on account of their easily digested narrative nature, but had unimportant sales. At the same time the Communist Party publishers in various countries reworked the official publicity matter their own "Marxist" way, but by reason of the unbudgeable fact that workers do not buy many books, these publications, too, came to be addressed to intellectuals, whom the Communist Parties started to recognize as their best customers.

About 1934, there started to appear more or less critical studies, or accounts of their experiences in Russia, by Communists or renegade Communists, returned to the unsaved West after working on jobs in Russia. Quite a number of these writers were workers, untutored in the use of the pen and suffering from the inability to generalize on the basis of their observations. Theirs were mostly factual reports that could easily be twisted by Hearsts to attack the very issues that the worker writers meant to defend in their attempts to tell what they considered to be the truth about Soviet Russia. The most important of these writers and their works are Rudolph Phillip: *Max Hoeltz, der letzte deutsche Revolutionary*, (Max Hoeltz, the last German revolutionary), Reso-Verlag, Zuerich, which attempts to describe the higher circles of the Soviet hierarchy; Kisselev, the escaped GPU commander of the Solovetzki Island penal reservation: *The Camp of the Dead*; A. Rudolf: *Abschied von Sowjetrussland* (Goodbye to Soviet Russia); Ciliga, the former secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, who after his expulsion from Russia, wrote, in "leftist" periodicals, articles describing how he dragged his way from Soviet concentration camp to Soviet concentration



camp; the recent writings of Victor Serge, a Belgian left winger who was freed from his Soviet concentration camp and permitted to leave Russia after his friends had thrown the recent Writers' Congress in Paris into turmoil with their protests against his incarceration; *Zweimal auf der Flucht* (In Flight Again), the highly interesting pamphlet by five Austrian *Schutzbuendler* (members of the heroic Austrian Workers' Defense Corps) written in the name of the several hundred Austrian Social-Democratic and Communist workers who were invited to Russia after their flight from the battlefields of 1934, to describe the situation of the wage workers in the Soviet Union. (A number of the remaining *Schutzbuendler*, all of whom, it appears, came to prefer bad capitalism to Soviet communism, were arrested by the Soviet secret police in the most recent purge.)

It is interesting to note that while none of the books mentioned met with success in the book market—the pamphlets and articles were, of course, read by the adherents of the worker groups that financed their publication—the Hearst syndicate in the United States featured in its newspapers the disgustingly doctored up reports of a number of returned American Communists. "You will find generally," reads a rejection slip received by one of the writers mentioned above (he hoped to have his book translated into English and published in the United States) "that people will not spend money for anti-Soviet literature; the bulk of such literature is supplied almost free of charge by the Liberty League and other red-baiting outfits. This book, if produced here in English, would have to sell at \$2 minimum. I am not confident about sufficient sales at that price."

In other words, for the professional publisher there are only two viewpoints on Soviet Russia: that of Hearst and the Liberty League and that of the Holy Rollers of the Friends of the Soviet Union. There is no place in the book market for the viewpoint of those who are interested first of all in a world-wide basic social transformation having as its purpose the abolition of classes. But only the latter viewpoint, on the other hand, needs to be intransigently critical, for the movement for a fundamental social emancipation cannot base itself on fairy tales. It must see its way clearly. It cannot fool itself about reality. The claims of Soviet Russia affect it closely. Victor Serge remarks in one of his essays:

"It is not easy to understand things in Russia. They are sometimes of an unequalled complexity. The bureaucracy has succeeded in combining bluff, lies, camouflage, appearances, false statistics and correct figures so ingeniously that without a profound knowledge of the reality of the country, of its language, of its psychology, without keeping a relentlessly critical mind, without true intellectual courage, it is impossible to see clearly there."

There have recently appeared two books that apparently do not depend on the condition of the general book market or on the subsidy of the red-baiters for means of publication. One is Sir Walter Citrine's *I Search for Truth in Russia* (Routledge, London). The Labor knight's book, however, must not be overestimated by politically awake workers, whose interests, it is obvious, are not identical with those of the trade union officialdom. Citrine produced his "study", primarily in order to wield it as a club on the obtrusive Communist Party of Great Britain. We must bear this in mind when we read Citrine's *Search*.

T. Grechenine reviewing in *Pravda* wrote:

"This book, which is only a poor and disgusting libel against the U.S.S.R., shows well who is Sir Walter Citrine: a mean petty bourgeois who fears the revolution and serves the bourgeoisie. With that aim this knight of the British Empire lies,

calumnies and defames. Everything is good enough for him to prove that the standard of living of the Soviet workers is below that of the workers of the capitalist countries. Thus Sir Walter notes in his journal: 'The commander of the ship *Molny* tells me that one must deduct from the wages the expense of the social services, of the cultural enterprises, of the defense of the country, etc. Thus everything that the Soviets do should be considered as being paid on wages' (page 17). Sir Walter makes believe that he has not understood and compares the wages of the Soviet workers with those of the English workers. And the fact the power is in the hands of the workers, how much do you estimate is that worth in pounds, shillings and pence?"

As you see, Citrine, when he searches for truth in Russia, forgets the higher things of life, and merely considers such base matters as food, wages, lodging, working conditions. Yet one wonders, upon examining his book, what about it has put the *Bolshevik* and *Pravda* reviewer in such a dudgeon. For all the British trade union knight has done is to present the same facts as are supplied to the usual innocent searchers for truth who come from decrepit capitalism to get material for beautiful tales in three-weeks' flying trips through vast Russia. Like the Webbs, the Hinduses and other professional publicists who have chosen to specialize in Soviet copy, Citrine bases his "search" on the mimeographed sheets of statistics provided to all high-ranking visitors by the Soviet bureau for enlightenment among foreigners. But while Citrine reproduces such statistics, it is also true that he interlards them with blunt, sometimes rather obtuse, comments, the purpose of which is to suggest to the British workers that they, unemployed or employed, are in a more comfortable situation than the "secure" Soviet proletarian. The Communist Party, like the Communist Parties of other countries, has used the sympathy felt by many Western workers and intellectuals for the work of modernization carried on in the Soviet State as a weapon against its rivals in the labor movement. Now by means of his book, Citrine hits back at the Communist Party of Great Britain. For since their major issue and arguing point is Russia, these parties stand or fall in Great Britain and elsewhere with a high or low evaluation of the achievements of the Soviet State. While Citrine gives his trade union readers more accurate information about the life of their fellow workers in Russia than furnished by the typical pro-Soviet publicist in the West, he, like them, apparently did not spend much time studying the problem. He permits himself to interpret the official statistics only in so far as they help him prove his point against the exaggerated claims of the Communists at home.

Citrine's book may be described as a compilation of statistics provided by the Soviet authorities and thrown into shape by an intellectually limited trade union official (after a flying trip through Russia) with the purpose of proving that by comparison with the inmates of the Soviet paradise, the British workers are not so badly off. It is significant that the literal recounting of the Soviet official statement by an unimaginative trade union dignitary is considered enough of a threat to common illusions about Russia.

It seems daring to declare that the finest instrument on hand applicable to that purpose is a booklet of 97 pages written by a French worker who returned about two years ago to the bench in his own country after spending more than eleven years in the Soviet Union. M. Yvon, an active member of the Communist Party when it was organized, went to Russia in 1921 to place his skilled worker's ability at the disposal of the building of socialism in Russia. He worked in the European Republic,



in Siberia, in Turkestan, in the Ukraine, first as a mill hand, then as a foreman, then as the director of a factory. Victor Serge wrote in reference to Yvon:

"When he returned from the Far East where he had learned the real labor of the Russian workers in the forests, on the barges, in the saw mills, the hard labor of which tourists have not the smallest idea, it seemed to me, I remember, that Yvon had forgotten his French . . . He returned from afar, bending under his heavy weight of experience. He fell into the large cities during the full crisis of the revolution, in the very midst of the bureaucratic conquest. I remember him as a silent, meditative, sullen man. I wondered at times what he would do with his load of facts in the service of the working class."

Here is an observer who, because of his special experience and long reflection, is able to cut through most of the fine claims and propaganda of the rulers of Soviet Russia. His manner should be found disconcerting by all salaried officials of the F.S.U. He does not permit himself to interpret. He merely states—pointed facts. He never fails to corroborate his statements with official declarations. Citrine would understand more about his own pile of statistics if he took the trouble to read Yvon's unassuming little booklet. It is a lot of fun to read Yvon's eight-page outline chapter entitled "The Real Power" after perusing the several hundred pages that such professional bunkologists as the Webbs, have devoted to their fat romance about Soviet Communism. And it would be amusing to have the logistic Trotzky attempt to confute the point of Yvon's crystal clear "New Classes" by calling the shrewd French worker a "Kantian sociologist" and a "poor literary stylist" (the phrases by which, in his pamphlet *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*, the great revolutionary Trotzky disposes in his typically grand manner of all people who dare not to agree with him about the class nature of the Soviet State).

In his concisely written little book, Yvon considers the following topics: 1. the material condition of the workers' life in Russia today (lodging, food, wages, conditions of work, the secret of the much vaunted social services); 2. the degree of liberty enjoyed by the worker in Russia today (personal liberty, collective liberty); 3. the State and social classes (official or fictitious power vs. real power; how the Party works; the social pyramid in the Soviet Union: the so-called "common" or "manual laborer", the small and middle officialdom, the "responsible-specialist").

Yvon writes:

"Socialism was to put the means of production in the hands of the workers. It was to give them the initiative and control of production and distribution.

"What we have seen of the material level of life and the liberty of the Russian worker shows that not only has this aim not been attained but nothing permits us to believe that there is a movement in that direction. The factory continues to be the slave pen where wage workers wear out their lives in hurried labor, the place of suffering which obsessing propaganda, the belt system, piece work have rendered even more hateful than before. Workers have no say about the factory, no say about production, no say about the regulation of labor. They sweat for a miserable wage, for the price of starvation.

"The agricultural laborer has either become a wage slave or is in the process of becoming one . . .

" . . . We do not accept the claim that there are no classes in the U.S.S.R. but only a Stalinist bureaucracy.

"No. It is not enough that a doctored 'Marxism' rules the

'specialists' and 'responsible officials' out of the category of ruling classes for us to qualify the Stalinist regime as 'socialist'.

"There are classes in the U.S.S.R.: a privileged class and an exploited class.

"Between the two, there is a clear cut difference in the manner of living.

"The classes in the railway trains correspond exactly to the existing social classes. The same is true about boats, restaurants, theatres, stores. The same way, palaces rise on pleasant sites for some people, and for other people wooden barracks are built near warehouses and smelly machines. The same people occupy the palaces and the same people live in the barracks.

"There is no private property. There is only State property. But the State no more represents the whole of the country's citizenry than the previous régime.

"A small number enjoy this State property. The great number support it, care for it, respect for it, fear it and are separated from it by gigantic police and repression apparatuses, much more gigantic than those that formerly separated the population from private property.

"As always, education, knowledge, experience tends to become the heirloom of the privileged sets.

"Energy and ambition are the appanage of the masters, of well groomed, healthy people, who enjoy homes full of light and gayety and who are free from material care. The mind of the new slave is absorbed in the daily struggle for existence. His character is fashioned by the obedience which he must show at every moment of his life . . .

"Voices are being raised in spite of the repression. They still express faith in a better world. These voices furnish the assurance that those below will not give up.

"Thousands of workers, reduced to bread and water, still break into spontaneous movements of revolt; strikes have not disappeared.

"Finally, individual acts of vengeance are much more common than is believed. They become known only when they touch highly placed persons, as Kirov, for example. The unheard of precautions taken by the directing set to guard their safety are proof that they do not at all trust the population.

"The class struggle goes on."

*Ce qu'est devenue la Révolution russe* (What Has Become of the Russian Revolution?) should be translated into English. It should be read by every worker who wants to learn to respect or criticize the Soviet Union and the Soviet State for what it is and not for any fairy tales devised by professional liars. Only clear sight and understanding can save us from a reaction from such untruths, leading to a mightier wave of Fascism.

*The January issue of International Review will contain Edgar L. Roof's summary and annotations of*

ANDRE GIDE'S "RETOUR DE L'U.R.S.S.

(Return from Soviet Union)

*Mr. Ayres' article has not arrived in time for this number, but will appear in the next issue.*

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